

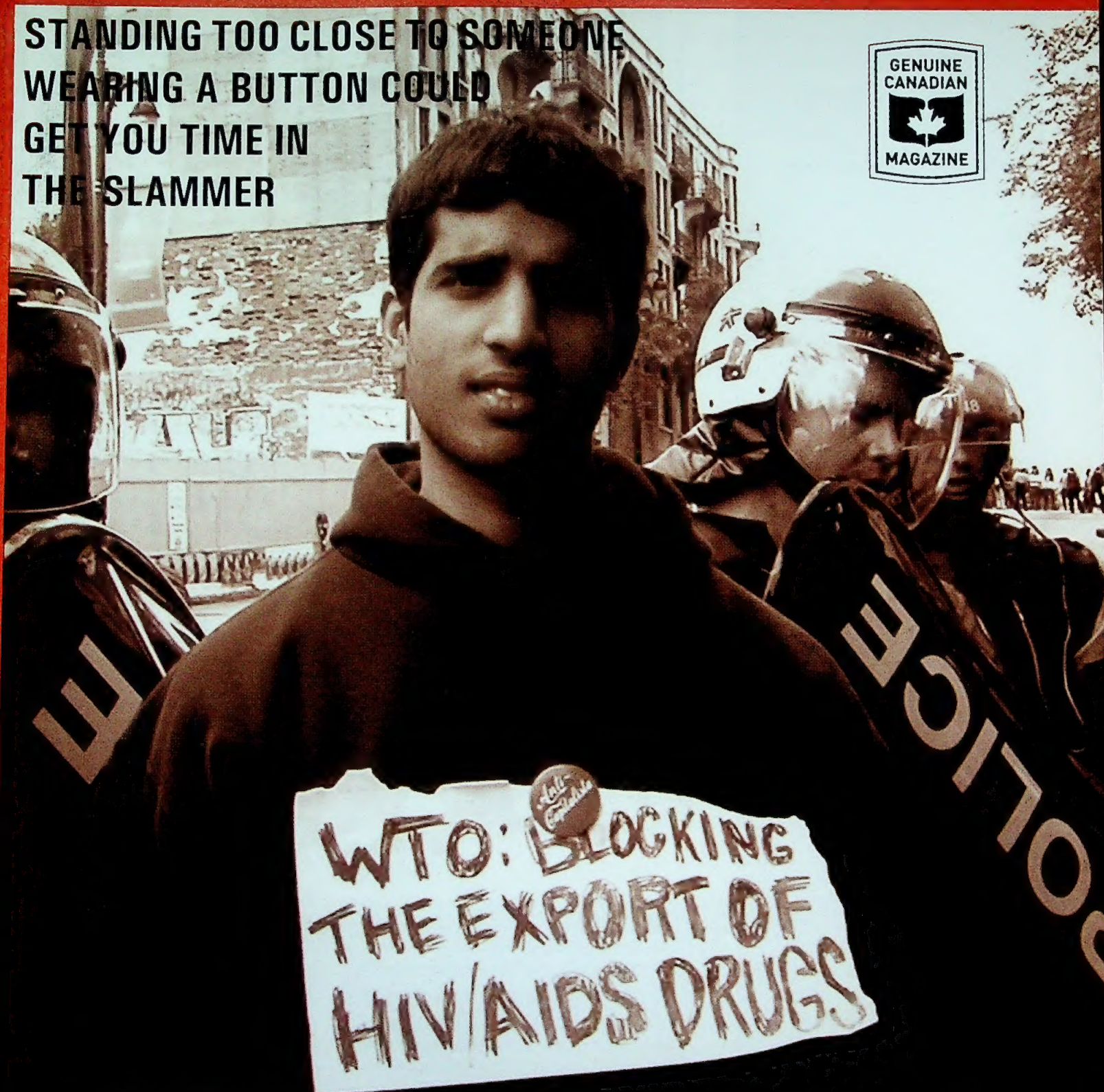
BRIARPATCH

Volume 32, Number 7

September 2003

\$3.00

**STANDING TOO CLOSE TO SOMEONE
WEARING A BUTTON COULD
GET YOU TIME IN
THE SLAMMER**



MEASURING POVERTY ♦ BSE ♦ EDUCATION AND TRADE DEALS ♦ EL SALVADOR
INSULTING THE SHRUB ♦ CUBA ♦ NUNS JAILED IN USA
TOURISTS JAILED IN CANADA ♦ THE ROADMAP

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COVER

*Unidentified med student
prior to his arrest in Montreal
photo: Rachel Engler-Stringer*



STAR OR STAR WARS?

Dear Briarpatch,

The only invaluable legacy left by Prime Minister Jean Chrétien has been his refusal to allow Canada to participate in the illegitimate and illegal attack against Iraq. This pre-emptive action, following the one in Afghanistan, has created a huge degree of insecurity among all who share this world.

No Canadian government has a democratic right to join the American Star Wars without holding a proper, successful, country-wide referendum. I am sure that the result of such an action would be a negative vote by a majority of Canadians. If we join without a referendum, we will have few grounds for claiming that we live in a democratic, sovereign country.

Art Bradford
Orillia, ON

SIMPLY SPEAKING

Dear Briarpatch,

The reason I'm buying these subscriptions is that these two young women have graduated from high school. Your magazine lays out the issues more clearly and simply without the ego-laden, round-about way of saying things that many American journalists have a tendency to do. Sure, I love Molly

Ivans or Alexander Cockburn in The Nation but they are too far away from the reality of the average American high school grad.

Americans are so completely under-educated in the USA that Briarpatch is needed as an SOS! Thank you for a fresh and beautiful way of connecting to people that seems missing in the USA.

Shirley Parsons-Reiner
St. Petersburg, Florida

BRIAR-NEWS

See page 22 to see if you're a winner in our Annual Art Raffle. Briarpatch is a big winner thanks to all the help from our subscribers and artist friends.

We wish to welcome new board members Catherine Verrall, Justin Philander and Clare Powell. They are replacing three members who recently stepped down at our AGM. A warm thank you to Phil Johnson, Teresa Nueman and Darin Milo for their guidance and contributions to the Briarpatch cause. Phil's role as president and chair of the board will be filled by Keith Jeworski and Denise MacDonald.

Briarpatch is Saskatchewan's independent alternative newsmagazine committed to building a socialist democratic society. We provide a forum for disadvantaged peoples and support progressive movements working to change unjust structures and build a genuine political and economic democracy. We support peace, equality, democracy, social justice, Aboriginal self-determination, and the protection of the environment. We oppose the oppression of people on the basis of nation, class, race, gender, ability, and sexual orientation.

September 2003

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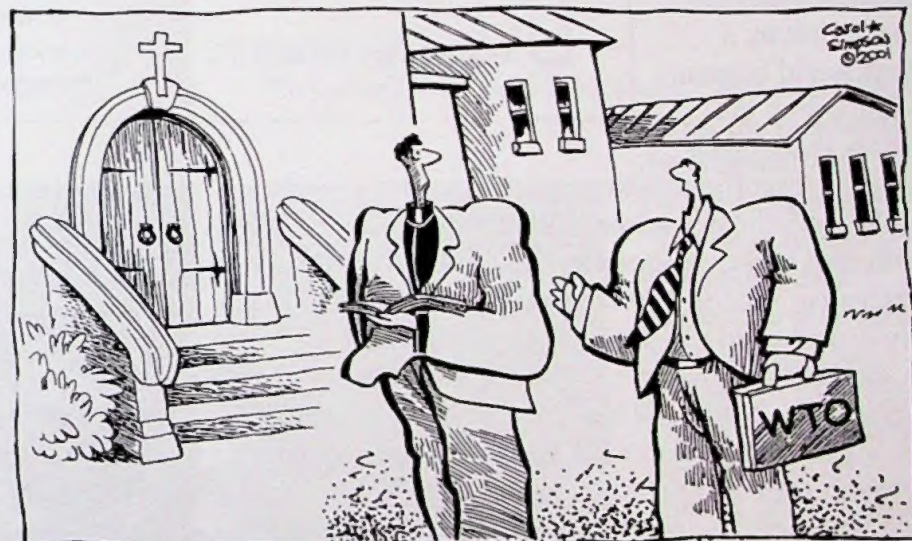
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*"But we DO love the poor.
 We plan to create millions more of them."*

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Church People or Terrorists?

The Lutheran World Federation met in Winnipeg at the end of July to discuss the theme: "For the healing of the world." Missing from the assembly were 51 delegates from the poorer regions of Africa and Asia. Their visas were denied, without explanation, by the Canadian Government.

The Prairie

Messenger points out that, "When USA President George W. Bush declared his war on terrorism, churches around the world were consistent in maintaining that terrorism could be stripped of its power, not by heavy-handedness from the powerful, but by a prudent world community addressing the injustices that plague millions of disenfranchised people."

The Catholic newspaper goes on express that "We are ashamed of the treatment the world community of Lutherans has received from our government. We are deeply disturbed to see our government so under the wing of its southern neighbour, even to the absurd point of declaring white black and black white - for, comparably, that is what the Canadian officials are doing by proclaiming through their administrative action that Christians dealing with poverty and injustice are the terrorists of this world."

(Source: *Prairie Messenger*, July 30, 2003.)

What's the Big Idea?

The "Big Idea" is a deal that would see Canada giving the USA a strong North American security perimeter and greater access to our energy resources in return for supposedly secure access to the USA market. It threatens the space we need to pursue needed economic, environmental and social policies, according to a new CCPA study.

Why the "Big Idea" is a Bad Idea, by senior Canadian Labour Congress economist Andrew Jackson critiques proposals for still deeper economic integration with the USA, discusses the economic costs and benefits of economic integration to date, and argues that Canada needs to retain room to manoeuvre in terms of economic

policy if we are to build a more sophisticated and environmentally sustainable economy.

Jackson explains that the Big Idea poses threats to the expression of distinctive Canadian values on defence, international affairs, and immigration and refugee issues. It would also limit our necessary ability to shape industrial development, to control our energy sector, to move towards

a more environmentally sustainable economy, to levy taxes at the level needed to maintain a distinctive Canadian social model, and to limit the impacts of international trade and investment agreements on our social and cultural policies.

According to Jackson, the Big Idea distracts attention from our real problems: the failure of corporate Canada to innovate and to invest adequately in research and development, workers, skills, and new plants and equip-

ment; and the threat to social policies brought about by constant invocations of the need for "competitive" taxes.

The study, Why the "Big Idea" is a Bad Idea, is available from the CCPA web site at:

<http://www.policyalternatives.ca>.

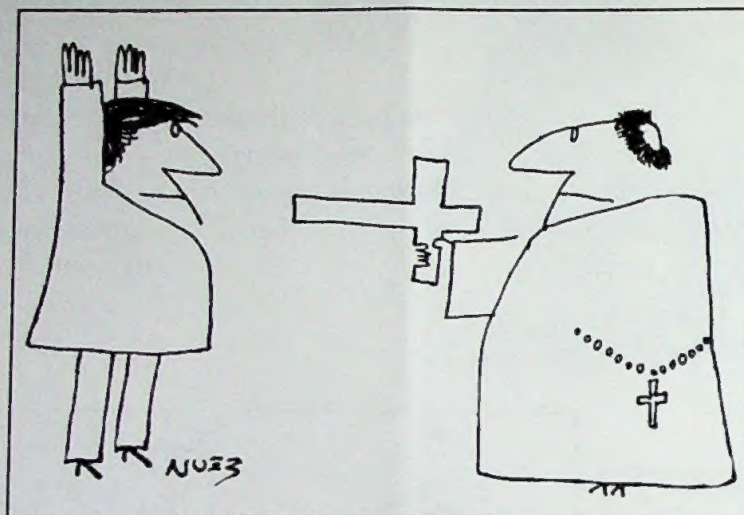
Free Ride in the City of Smog

After a two-year campaign by Humanize Toronto (HTO), City Hall has adopted a motion that moves the city closer to free public transportation on all smog days.

The HTO campaign calls for the city to make public transportation free on all smog days and send the bill to the Federal and Provincial governments, who collect over \$4 billion in gas tax revenue alone. The motion adopted by City Hall asks the public transportation system administrators to "prepare a report on the costs, service level impacts and the desirability of requesting funding from Environment Canada" for free service on smog days.

While this is a step in the right direction, it's only a motion asking for a study to be done. We feel that our air and our health can't wait any longer. This spring, Windsor launched a program to provide free public transit on smog days.

Together, our work is having an effect, and together we can achieve better air quality and fully funded transit in Toronto. To sign the petition go to <http://www.PetitionOnline.com/smogday/petition.html> or



contact us at:
HUMANIZE TORONTO
1073 Bathurst St.
Toronto ON
M5R 3G8
416-530-4487
humanizetoronto@sympatico.ca

Lord Black and the Christians Face Libel Charges

During a visit last year, hundreds in Victoria BC gave George Galloway, the Scottish Member of Parliament from Glasgow, a standing ovation for his condemnation of American and British policies in Iraq, Afghanistan and Palestine, and for his eloquent appeal for justice for the citizens of these countries.

Galloway was steadfast and public in his opposition to American and British arms sales and support for Saddam Hussein in the 1980s (when he was then considered a friend by those governments). Galloway opposed the war on Iraq in 1991 and the inhumanity of sanctions on the people of Iraq for 12 years. He once took a double decker bus across North Africa to Iraq, loaded with medical supplies. He spoke out against the "war on terrorism," the war on Afghan people. He has always called for justice and self-determination for Palestine.

This year he led a group of Labour MPs who voted against the latest war on Iraq. He condemned the British and USA governments for their war mongering at dozens of public meetings and demonstration. Although censored by his own party, he could not be silenced with threats of de-listing or political exile. He has had solid and growing support from his constituents through four elections.

So when *UK Telegraph* newspapers - owned by Canada's own Conrad (Lord) Black with board members Henry Kissinger, Richard Perle and (Lady) Barbara Amiel - and the *Christian Science Monitor* published a story about documents "found" in a Baghdad building in April that proved that Galloway had accepted six million pounds as bribes to promote Saddam Hussien, it seemed all too easy to de-list the

fearless politician and discredit him completely.

Now ink tests have shown that the documents were forgeries and both papers have apologized. But damage has been done to Galloway, others have been intimidated by his fate, and the facts and machinations surrounding this malicious fabrication have not been revealed. Galloway said all along that the documents were frauds and this was a deliberate campaign to smear him and silence political opposition to war and injustice.

Galloway has launched libel actions against the *Christian Science Monitor* and the *Daily Telegraph* for their lack of care in checking the document and the damage the publications have caused to him. It may be that the source and schemes behind these blatant lies can be revealed by a court case.

The Victoria Iraq Solidarity Organization is coordinating donations of funds to help pay the legal costs. All contributions will be acknowledged and registered. Please help in this important legal, political and moral struggle. Send donations to: VISO (Victoria Iraq Solidarity Organization), 1022 McGregor Ave. Victoria, BC V8S 3T9.

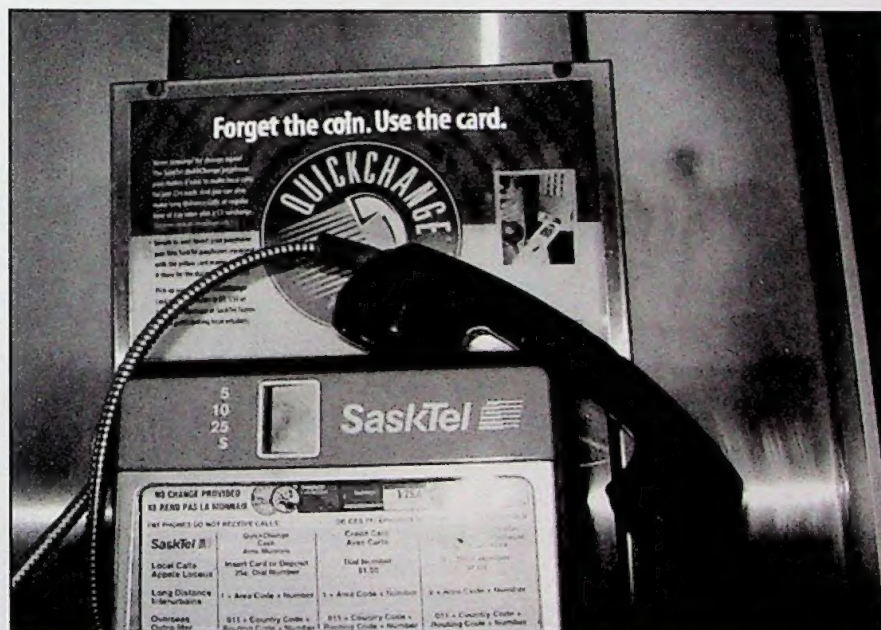
ET Can't Call Home

According to an article by Pippa Lawson in NAPO

News, the publication of the National Anti Poverty Organization, "The days of widely available public payphones may soon be over, if telephone companies have their way. With the increasing popularity of cell phones, phone companies are finding that they can't make as much money on payphones."

When the CRTC decided to investigate whether this was indeed a problem, NAPO joined with others to form a "Consumers Group"

which undertook surveys to assess the problem of payphone access. They found a general sense that it is an important public service. Low-income people across the country reported that they use payphones because they have no other option - often for emergencies. While 49 percent of Canadians in general use payphones occasionally, 88 percent of low-income Canadians use them regularly and many report frustration as a result of payphone removal. Another reported frustration was the growing number of payphones that don't accept cash.



Pettigrew Attempts to Silence Those Voicing Dissent Against the WTO

by Tyler McCreary

We were peaceful. We were quiet. We were sitting, talking. Some were even sleeping. And we were arrested for participating in a riot - a charge later reduced to illegal assembly.

However, this is not only about wrongful arrest. This is about silencing dissent - through government lies, through media misrepresentations and, ultimately, through police repression.

This is also about refusing to be silenced. About standing up for justice, naming the real role of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in global society, and denouncing the criminalization of dissent against it.

The government justified our arrests as necessary to maintain order after a handful of protesters smashed windows at the July 28th mobilizations against the WTO mini-ministerial meeting in Montreal. The arrests occurred despite the involvement of only a small minority of the protesters in these acts; despite the dispersal of the mobilization soon after the destruction of the windows; and despite the fact that the majority of the over 340 arrests were of peaceful people far from the area where the protests and WTO meeting occurred.

Media proclamations spoke to the need to protect society from the "vandals" and "hooligans" who were out in the streets "wrecking havoc" and "getting cheap thrills," threatening to subvert the WTO in its "efforts to do good"

earlier that morning. As a society, we need to become deeply critical of how the media is used to justify mass arrests of people voicing dissent in an alleged democracy.

We must challenge how the imprisonment of protesters and the imposition of bail conditions prevent protesters from the exercise of their basic civil liberties. And we must become critical of the real role of the WTO in society, contrary to the government rhetoric parroted by the media.

Canadian Trade Minister Pierre Pettigrew stated before the meeting that disruptive protesters would "screw the African cotton farmers and the African HIV victims" since negotiators planned to discuss farm subsidies and generic drug access. This vilification of the protesters is a severe and intentional misrepresentation by the minister of the realities of the current WTO negotiations that demonizes critics and intensifies the marginalization of their perspectives.

Contrary to Pettigrew's claims, the plight of African cotton farmers and AIDS victims is not attributable to protesters, and is not about to be solved by 26 developed countries holding discussions closed to the very countries in which these crises are occurring. Rather, these crises are a consequence of African countries following the neo-liberal policies the developed countries and the WTO promote.

The devastation of African cotton farmers is the outcome of following the neo-liberal policies imposed by the International Monetary Fund. Increasing cotton

WTO: BLOCKING
THE EXPORT OF
HIV/AIDS DRUGS

photo: Rachel Engler-Stringer

production for export while decreasing the production of domestically consumed foods has increased the involvement of African communities in the global market, exposing these farmers to cruel international market fluctuations and dictates. Underdeveloped countries are exploited and repressed by a skewed world order that entrenches domination by an elite of the developed world.

Similarly, the current WTO negotiations focus on establishing allowances for generic drug production of patented medications during medical crises - this does not represent the benevolence of the developed world. Prior to previous WTO negotiations, every country reserved the right to independently establish national patent law. This discussion of returning the right of national control of patents (in limited circumstances) represents a concession to critics of the neo-liberal agenda. Now the WTO, in all its benevolence, is proposing to grant inherent national rights in exchange for accepting patented genetically modified crops, which threaten the ability of farmers to save seeds - undermining the food security of these nations.

Within the media and government, these views are so marginalized that people have taken to the streets to make their voices heard. Some individuals have been so alienated from the political process that they are resorting to the smashing of windows to be heard. This is reflected by the

media's virtual non-coverage of the peaceful "No One is Illegal" march but heavy coverage of Monday's broken windows. Rather than denounce protesters (of which only a few smashed windows) as violent, we must be critical of how this environment (where people feel the need to resort to these actions be heard) is created and how it can be changed.

I believe the policies of the WTO and the criminalization of dissent against them are both, well, criminal. The vandals wreaking havoc upon the social fabric are inside, not outside, these meetings. And we need to fight to get these criminals, who are dictating the direction of our society, behind bars or at least - the very least - out of the seats of power.

Tyler McCreary is studying sociology at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon, and was one of those arrested at the WTO protest in Montreal. To donate to the Legal Defense of the Saskatchewan residents arrested contact Crystal Clarke by phone at (306) 653-6327 or by email at crysclarke@hotmail.com.

Your help is needed. To donate to the Montreal legal team representing those that were arrested, contact Libertat Legal Collective, 1420 Sherbrooke St. W., Suite 404, Montreal, QC, H3G 1K5.

The Price of Freedom

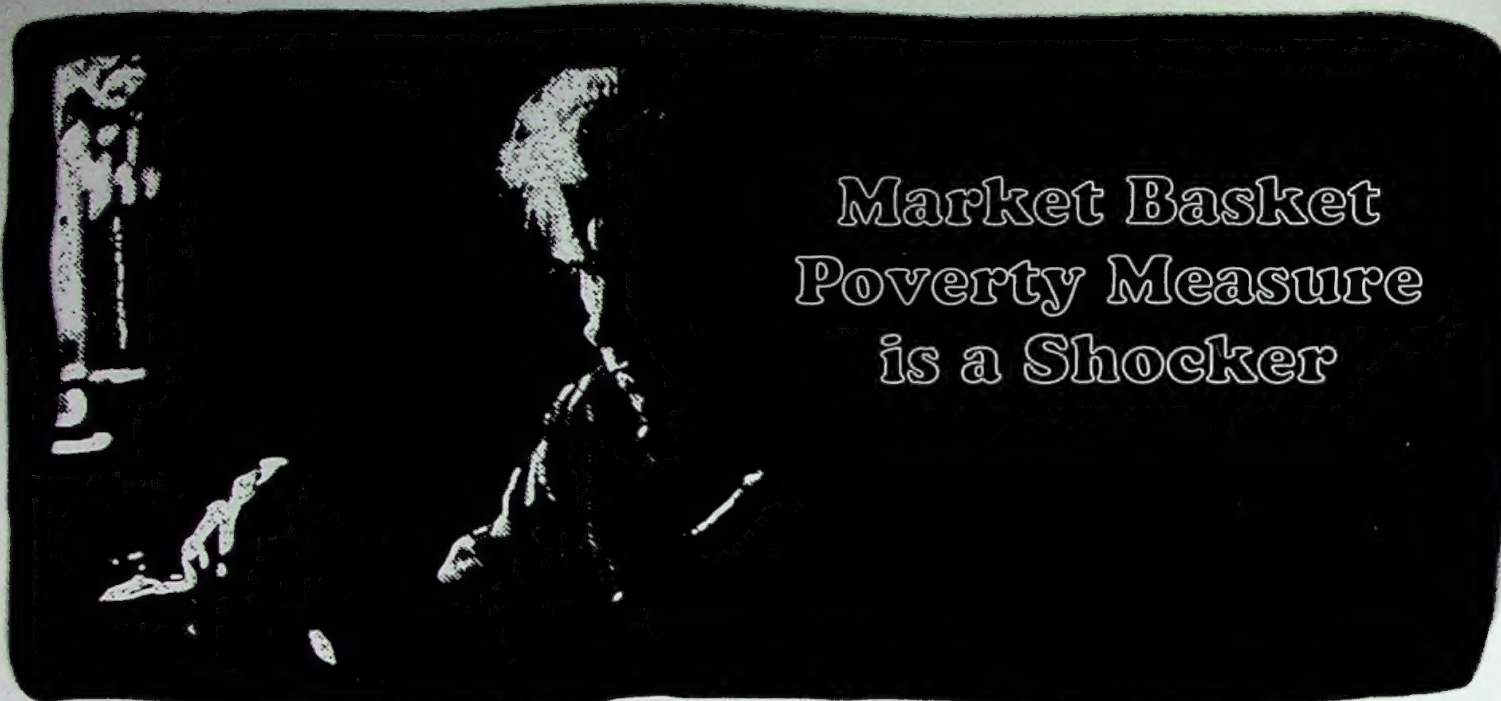
On the morning of July 28, 2003, an overwhelming force of Montreal riot police surrounded, detained then arrested people peaceably assembled on private property (with permission) in a "green zone" publicized as a safe space for theatre, art and music. People identified as medics, journalists and legal observers - as well as a doctor, a construction worker and several tourists - were among those loaded into police vans. With very few exceptions, police held these people in jail for "unlawful assembly" until they signed release conditions that surrendered a long list of constitutional rights and they paid \$200 in bail (for those residing outside the city).

One arrestee remained in a Montreal jail until August 15th. He challenged the unlawful mass arrest and the compromise to our constitutional rights. Vaughn Barnett of Fredericton, New Brunswick, refused to sign a conditional release that would limit rights of free expression and assembly, arguing that all charges and conditions for his release should be dropped. The disclosure obtained prior to Barnett's

July 30th bail hearing made no reference to Barnett himself and made no suggestion that he participated in any illegal activity.

Back in Fredericton, Vaughn Barnett works as a legal researcher and advocate for people who cannot afford a lawyer. He represented himself in court. The "Free Vaughn" campaign organized support while he was being held in a medium security detention unit in Montreal (Bordeaux Prison). A spokesperson urged, "We need to support our political prisoners at every step and show them that they are not alone! He is standing up for all of our rights." They are currently raising money to help offset the lost wages Barnett suffered while he was locked down. If you can help, please contact the Free Vaughn Campaign at freevaughn@ziplip.com

At his court appearance on August 15th, the judge granted his release without conditions or bail. As well, the judge advised Vaughn that during his bail hearing on July 30th, his constitutional rights were denied by the court.



Market Basket Poverty Measure is a Shocker

by J. F. Conway

photo: Gary Gough

Back in 1994, the right-wing Fraser Institute published Professor Sarlo's *Poverty in Canada – 1994*, an aggressive attack on Statistics Canada's "official" poverty line as too generous, thus unnecessarily inflating the count of Canada's poor. A more rigorous measure, the professor argued, based on the bare, no-frills necessities of life would lead to a much lower official poverty count, perhaps cutting that count by as much as 50 percent. Sarlo and the Fraser Institute have been pushing that line ever since, as have members of the Alliance party.

This right-wing, ideological offensive against the way Canada counts its "officially" poor received increasing support from the business lobby and many provincial governments. Even some federal government officials quietly supported the argument. The reasons for this support were understandable, if reprehensible. The business lobby argued that inflated poverty numbers put indefensible pressure on governments for increased social spending, particularly on income support and re-distribution programs.

Provincial governments of all political stripes continue to be deeply embarrassed that their welfare rates fall far, far below the poverty line. For example, in 2002 a couple with two children on welfare re-

ceived anywhere from a low of 49 percent of the poverty line in Quebec to a high of 65 percent in Prince Edward Island. And provinces have not kept the minimum wage at reasonable levels. Back in the 1970s a worker could earn a poverty line wage by working 50 hours a week on the minimum wage; in the 1980s this rose to 87 hours; in the 1990s, to 100 hours. Activists therefore routinely demand welfare rates and minimum wages at least at the level of the poverty line, something provinces insist they cannot afford. Given all this pressure, and attracted by the possibility that much of Canada's official poverty could be erased by the wave of a statistical magic wand, Ottawa decided to engage in a consultation process leading to a new measure of poverty, the Market Basket Measure (MBM). In April 1999 the task was assigned to researchers, experts and officials of Human Resources Development Canada under Minister Pierre Pettigrew.

The first official count of poverty under the MBM was released on May 27th, 2003. The Fraser Institute, the business lobby and provincial governments, eager for a new "realistic" (lower) official poverty count were doubtless shocked. According to the MBM the number of Canada's poor is much

higher than the commonly accepted Statistics Canada Low-Income Cut-Off (LICO). The MBM puts the poor at 13.1 percent, compared to LICO's 10.9 percent. And some provinces were more deeply shocked than others. For example, British Columbia's MBM put the poor at 20 percent rather than LICO's 12.4 percent.

It appears that the researchers and experts at Human Resources Development Canada successfully resisted the political pressure and were determined to improve on Statistics Canada's LICO, a crude measure of poverty which fails adequately to account for the ups and downs in the cost of living across Canada's varied regions. The MBM was constructed to take these carefully into account on a province by province, city by city, and region by region basis. What has emerged in this MBM therefore is a more sensitive and realistic poverty snapshot.

But the danger of the MBM lies in the very forces that brought about its birth. Those who wanted a lower "official" poverty count - ideologically committed conservatives, the business lobby, provincial governments - will be deeply disappointed and will campaign to massage the MBM. And the MBM is more easily massaged than Statistics Canada's LICO. The debate has already begun about just what goes into the market basket and there are suggestions that the recent market basket was just too full of non-essential goodies. Do the poor really need video rentals, taxi fares, the cost of running a five year old car (if you live in a rural area), many clothing items, an over-indulgent grocery cart? The fact is that the MBM can be very quickly and easily massaged to produce any level of poverty required by the politically motivated. I am sure Professor Sarlo is busily constructing his own version of such a market basket.

In the long run, the MBM will confuse rather than clarify the poverty debate. With three official measures of poverty on the go - the LICO, the MBM, and 50 percent or less of the median income (used for international comparisons) - partisans will

cherry pick the poverty rate that suits the argument to be made. And we can expect that there will be powerful pressure to massage the MBM downwards in order to produce the lower poverty rate its original advocates wanted and expected. Rather than debat-

ing poverty and poverty policy, we will be mired in an endless debate about measures of "real" poverty and whether a lack of money for video rentals and new jeans for kids should be considered an aspect of poverty. Thus will commence, once again, an attack on the poor as we again blame the victims of our economic failure as a society.

John Conway is a University of Regina political sociologist and the

author of The Canadian Family in Crisis, to be released in its fifth edition this fall by Lorimer.

What has emerged is a more sensitive and realistic poverty snapshot.

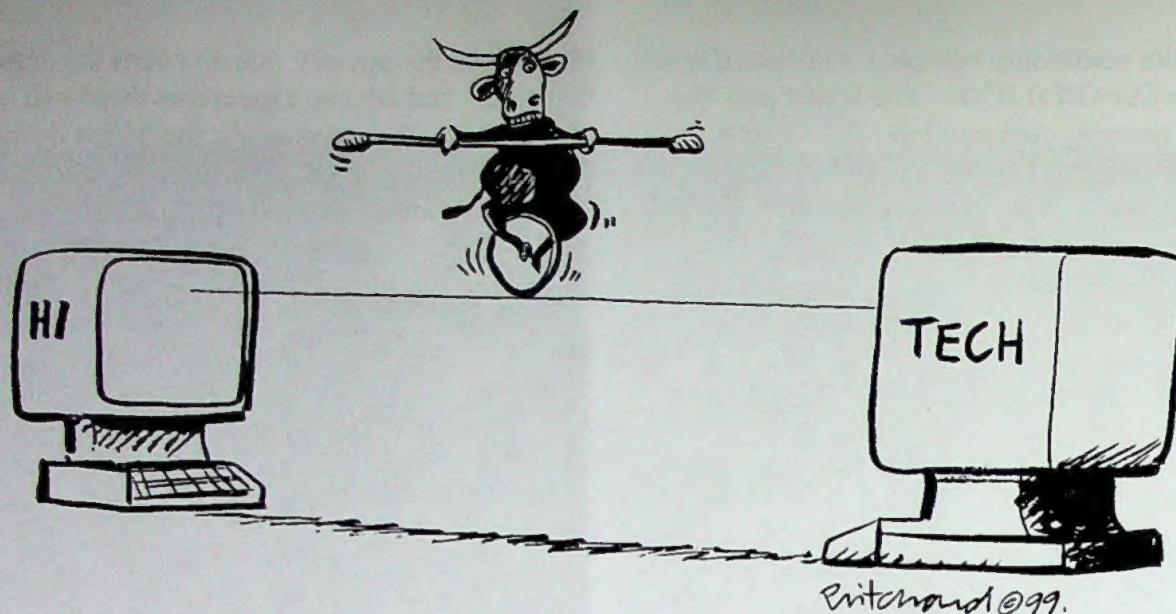
CUSO is looking for Canadians with skills and experience in agriculture, forestry, fisheries, environment, and community activism to work in volunteer programmes in some thirty countries world-wide. Standard contracts: 2 years, plus language training, basic cost of living and benefits.

Since 1961, more than 12,000 Canadians have gone overseas to work with CUSO's partners. CUSO supports alliances for global social justice. We work with people striving for freedom, self-determination, gender and racial equality and cultural survival.

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Check our web site at www.cuso.org for current postings and information on how to apply or call 1-888-434-CUSO (2876) for the office nearest you.



Stop the Madness!

Science supports farmer's theory that pesticides and trace metals are responsible for BSE outbreaks on non-organic farms.

by Carla Roppel

Mark Purdey is an organic farmer and a self-taught scientist. He has been published in peer-reviewed scientific journals, and co-authored papers with a number of scientists. His work has been pooh-poohed for decades, but now people are taking a serious second look at his theory.

For years, he has tracked occurrences of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) and other Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies (TSEs) in Britain and around the world. He believes that abnormal prions are responsible for the brain damage that leads to BSE or other TSEs. He also believes, however, that the use of organophosphate pesticides along with exposure to high levels of manganese, caused normal prions to misfold, thereby leading to BSE.

The Brain and Trace Metals

Brains need trace amounts of copper, iron and zinc to work properly - about 6 mg of each. Imbalances cause problems, like learning difficulties for

children or higher risk for senile dementia among seniors. When they are bound to anti-oxidant proteins, trace metals neutralize dangerous free radicals by mopping up electrons. When there is too little of one trace metal present, or too much of one relative to another, the result can be development of a neurodegenerative disease like Alzheimer's or familial amyotrophic lateral sclerosis.

Trace metal imbalances have been implicated in the development of BSE as well. Prion proteins (PrP) normally bind with copper, and act as antioxidants. Dr. David Brown, a biochemist at Cambridge University, found that manganese binds equally well with PrP. However, the manganese causes the PrP to misfold. It loses its antioxidant properties and becomes resistant to degradation. Enzymes that break down normal PrP (bonded with copper) can't digest the manganese version. The mutant PrP, now known as PrP^{Sc}, is in the animal, and in the food chain to stay.

The "Accepted" Theory

The BSE inquiry and much of the scientific community believe that BSE began with a single chance spontaneous mutation of a PrP sometime during the 70s. When the affected animal died, it was rendered into meat and bone meal (Mbm) and fed back to other cows. Over time, other infected cows died, were rendered and fed back to even more cows. In this way, infective PrP was concentrated in the Mbm animal feed chain, and eventually achieved the lethal concentrations that led to the 1985 outbreak.

Purdey contests this theory, stating: "The sudden emergence and establishment of BSE over a short period of time - 18 months - does not fit with the single cow/feed mill idea. If correct, one would expect to see BSE clinically by the 2nd generation (in those cattle that had eaten a relatively high dose of the infected batch of Mbm from the feed mill). The feed would likely have produced a few cases on a susceptible farm, and thus should have been noticed (even in retrospect). There is no evidence that there were these isolated pockets of the disease prior to late 1984. BSE would have developed slowly in small areas with a lull throughout the lives of the second generation BSE cows before there was a second input of PrPbse into the food chain - likely to be 5 years minimum for incubation, slaughter, rendering, feed distribution and finally feeding to the next generation of cattle. One would expect to see an epidemiological picture that related to Mbm from specific feed mills. There's no evidence for this."

Wanted

A closer look at the unanswered questions

Why would Purdey believe that there was more to the BSE story than simply feeding meat and bone meal (Mbm) infected with abnormal prions to ruminants? Here is a summary of some of his reasons:

- * Mbm fed to experimental animals doesn't produce TSE or any disease.
- * The pattern of infection in animals with Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) and Scrapie does not suggest an oral route.
- * Thousands of tons of Mbm exported abroad to many countries, when the "mutant" prion PrPsc/bse content was at its peak, did not produce BSE.
- * No Scrapie strain inoculated into the brains of cattle has produced BSE.
- * Sheep/Scrapie remains have been added to cattle feed since the mid 19th century (before modern rendering treatments were introduced); cattle have also cross-grazed pasture with sheep. Therefore, cattle have been exposed to Scrapie since its beginnings 250 years ago without getting BSE.
- * Changes in the continuous flow processing of the Mbm (reported lowering of temperature and the cessation of chemical extraction) often blamed for triggering BSE occurred in several other countries without causing BSE.
- * A change in rendering temperature would have been irrelevant, because mutant prion can withstand furnace temps of 1000° C.
- * Cattle now developing BSE in Britain and abroad have not eaten Mbm containing PrPsc/bse or been exposed via parents.
- * No home-reared cows on organic farms have developed BSE (20 percent Mbm was permitted in their feed).

An Alternate Theory

For 20 years, Purdey has promoted the hypothesis that BSE was - and is - caused by an interaction

between organophosphate pesticides (OP) and trace metals. He believes that Britain had a higher occurrence of BSE because, five years before the BSE crisis, the Ministry of Agriculture mandated the use of Phosmet insecticide to control the Warble Fly. Cows were treated twice a year, with the oil-based pesticide poured along their spines at 4X the maximum dose. Some even received a "voluntary" application 2 weeks later. Phosmet was also used as a double-strength powder to control lice. One of the known effects of Phosmet is that it ties up copper in biological systems.

At the same time, Purdey found that "there was a sudden increase in the body load of manganese of British cattle." This increase was due to dietary changes and the use of organophosphate pesticides, which caused manganese to replace copper in the prion protein. PrP needs copper to give the protein the shape that makes it act as an antioxidant. However, when manganese binds with PrP, its shape, and therefore, its function change. It becomes much more resistant to destruction, and can no longer function as an antioxidant. In fact, in losing its anti-oxidant properties, the mutant PrP becomes neurotoxic, leading to plaque development in infected brain matter.

Not only BSE...

Purdey has examined outbreaks of sporadic TSEs around the world: Slovakia, Calabria, Sardinia, Japan; Groote Syndrome on an island off the NE coast of Australia; Chronic Wasting Disease among deer in Colorado, Scrapie among sheep in Iceland. All locations share two common characteristics: "abnormally high levels of manganese and rock-bottom levels of copper, selenium and zinc," according to Purdey. In each location, a specific source of manganese was identified: volcanic, acid rain, steel, glass, ceramic, dye, munitions, lead-free gasoline refineries, the take-off airspace beyond airports, fungicide or fertilizer sprays. These coincidences seemed prophetic of the occurrence of TSEs in nearby populations - whether animal or human.

Check all Leads

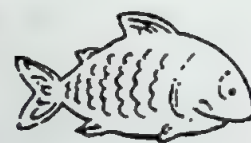
Despite the expenditure of millions of dollars, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency has been unable to explain how or where that cow became infected. If the generally accepted theory that BSE is transmitted through infected feed were true, surely there would have been more than one infected cow.

On the other hand, if Purdey's theory is correct, and BSE has arisen as the result of a constellation of factors - prions, pesticides and trace metals - then the BSE regulatory and monitoring systems in Canada and around the world are pointed at the wrong target. The only way to clarify the issue and answer legitimate questions about both theories, and about the role of organophosphate insecticides and trace metals in the development of BSE is to engage in immediate investigation. It's a matter of public health and safety.

The only thing that is absolutely clear is that industrializing beef production is costing farmers, and consumers, dearly! Highly concentrated production forces producers to use hormones, antibiotics and protein supplements to improve weight gains and control disease and parasites. BSE is a direct outcome of this intensive, highly concentrated model of beef production.

Carla Roppel is editor of the Union Farmer Quarterly, where this article originally appeared. She questions the wisdom of the current model of "assembly line" food production.

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"I know how hard it is
for you to put food on
your family."

-Greater Nashua, N.H.,
Chamber of Commerce,
Jan. 27, 2000

Dubya Speak...

(before they put the
speaker in his ear)



"I think if you know
what you believe, it
makes it a lot easier to
answer questions. I
can't answer your
question."

- Reynoldsburg, Ohio,
Oct. 4, 2000

"It's clearly a budget. It's got a lot of numbers in it."

-Reuters, May 5, 2000

"There ought to be limits to freedom. We're aware of this
website, and this guy is just a garbage man, that's all he
is."

- discussing a web site that parodies him

"It's your money. You paid for it."

- LaCrosse, Wis., Oct. 18, 2000

"I'm a uniter not a divider. That means when it comes time
to sew up your chest cavity, we use stitches as opposed to
opening it up."

- on David Letterman, March 2, 2000

Learning, Ltd.

Looking beyond the "Non-discrimination" threat to education, there are other related perils to contend with.

by Yves Engler

In early August student organizations from around the world came together for a conference at the Université de Montreal to discuss globalization's negative effects on post-secondary education. As a result, organizers are calling for an international student day of action on September 13th against the World Trade Organization's possible inclusion of education in the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) negotiations.

Students worry that if GATS negotiations include education, this could seriously imperil public post-secondary institutions. If the WTO's "non-discriminatory" clause came into effect it could require governments to provide at least equal amounts of funding to private universities as is given to public entities, irrespective of tuition and housing rates that are levied at private institutions. This would seriously undermine public post-secondary education around the world.

Taxation

While blocking any inclusion of education in WTO or Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) negotiations is certainly a laudable objective, defenders of public post-secondary education need to broaden our analysis. Capitalist globalization harms public post-secondary

education in a myriad of ways.

What is commonly termed "globalization" is actually the process of re-structuring the world economy in the interests of transnational corporations and international investors. It is being orchestrated through the ascendance of neo-liberal ideology.

Neo-liberalism can be summarized as free trade and investment, privatization or commercialization, and a

reduction in social spending (corporate subsidies seem to be okay). Basically, neo-liberalism is an attack against social entitlements through the championing of capitalist entitlements and the capitalist marketplace. All of which harms public post-secondary education.

Central to the process of corporate globalization are "free" trade agree-

ments, which in a more honest world would be known as free investment agreements. These agreements give corporations and their wealthy shareholders increased power to demand lower taxes to "compete" with lower-taxed regions. This thwarts the necessary redirection of this money toward social spending.

According to a *Financial Times* editorial, "since 1996 the average tax rate has fallen from 37.5 to 30.8 percent among the 30 industrialized countries of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Develop-

The success of a global research network in identifying the SARS pathogen is an example of the huge payoff that can result when researchers put aside visions of patents and glory for their individual laboratories and let their work behave more like, well, a virus.

ment. The reason: Competition." In Canada, Paul Martin reduced the corporate tax rate from 28 percent to 21 percent in 2000. Similarly, there has been a reduction in personal income taxes, disproportionately to the benefit of the wealthy.

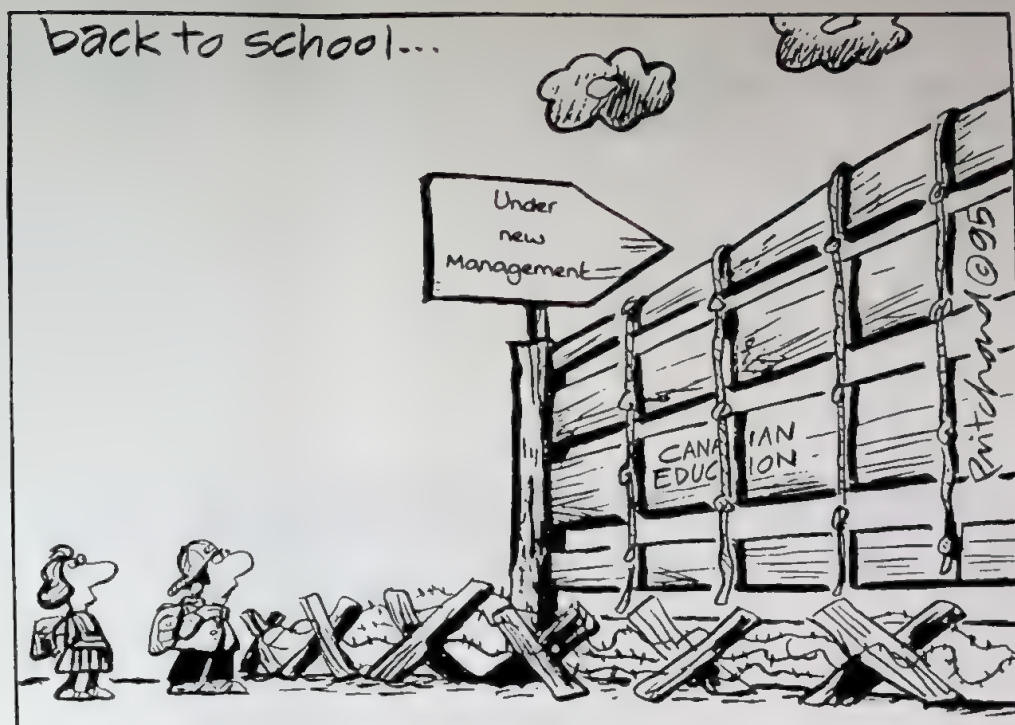
While the business friendly *Financial Times* may praise a reduction in corporate taxation, the benefits to those of us not connected to the corporate world are less evident. In fact, a reduced tax base usually leads to a decline in spending on important social services - including university funding. According to Statistics Canada, between 1990 and 2000, government money as a percentage of the post-secondary education budget dropped from 69 percent to 55 percent.

The effects of a decline in funding are many, but most importantly, at least from a student's (and probably societal) perspective, is a reduction in accessibility through rising tuition. Between 1992 and 2002 Canadian undergraduate arts tuition increased by 135 percent, approximately six times the inflation rate. Families in the bottom quintile of Canadian wealth, for example, would have had to put aside 14 percent of their after-tax income in 1990/91 to pay the costs of university tuition and fees, but by 1998/99 they would need to devote 23 percent. Basically, poor and working class children are being told that unless they have terrific grades or that they are willing to incur huge debts, university is not for them.

Ideology

Another reason for the drop in funding is that the neo-liberal ideology opposes social spending (of course "security" spending doesn't seem to count). Neo-liberalism claims that the private sector does a better job in providing services, post-secondary education included.

At its core neo-liberalism is antagonistic to social entitlements, preferring capitalist entitlements. Neo-liberal ideologues oppose the concept of people's universal right to post-secondary education. Similarly, dominant discourse today is that the individual who benefits from education should pay for it. In this conception of society, post-secondary education is seen



as having little social value - it's only about getting a better corporate job.

New Funding

As well as tuition increases, the replacement of government funding with private "donations" is another of the most obvious ways by which universities recoup lost public moneys. While some donors are alumni who earnestly care about their alma mater, in the majority of cases this money is coming from corporations and others with their own agenda.

Around 20 percent of university financing now comes from private sources. For example, according to the *Montreal Gazette*, "in 2000, Canadian universities and teaching hospitals received \$161 million from industry for medical research and development, most of it from drug companies. This exceeded the total contribution from all provincial governments combined and was more than half the amount received from federal sources." Where this leads is clear. A recent report by a team of Canadian professors concluded that "drug firms compromise research." The *National Post* says "the contracts researchers sign with pharmaceutical companies routinely prevent the scientists from disclosing drug risks to patients and the public."

Patents

Part of the rise of capitalist entitlement is the ubiquitous "privatizing of the commons" which at universities has occurred through a shift of focus towards patenting research for business interests.

The effects of this change go beyond simply allowing universities to profit from research. It's part of a process of shaping universities in the interests of the private sector. The commercialization of research pushes universities to focus on private profit instead of the public good, increasing funding for research at the cost of other aspects of the university.

Canadian universities, following the American lead, are rapidly learning how to play the patent game. According to an article in the *Toronto Star*, "In 2001, 27 Canadian universities generated \$64.5 million (USA), an 82 percent increase in patent royalties over the previous year." The *Boston Globe* reports that "some say patents stifle innovation by fostering secrecy among academic peers, instead of promoting an exchange of ideas." The Canadian Association of University Teachers explains that, "the commercialization of a product depends on patenting it. Patentability, in turn, depends on secrecy."

Research done collaboratively is usually more efficient. After all, two (or a hundred) heads are better than one. The research accomplished in the aftermath of the SARS scare, exemplifies the effectiveness of open research. According to Dr. David Heymann, Executive Director, World Health Organization Communicable Diseases programs, "the pace of SARS research has been astounding because of an extraordinary collaboration among laboratories from countries around the world." Canadian researchers from a number of different institutes across the country worked at it together, while in Singapore they created a SARS Clinical Consortium comprised of 15 research institutes. Seth Shulman, writing in *Technology Review*, explains; "the success of a global research network in identifying the SARS pathogen is an example of the huge payoff that can result when researchers put aside visions of patents and glory for their individual laboratories and let their work behave more like, well, a virus."

Another result of money being moved to areas that are more conducive to innovation (or private profit) is that students become increasingly neglected. Economically and ideologically, universities are increasingly becoming institutions of research directed towards endeavors beneficial to private interests. As reported in the *Globe and Mail*, David Robinson of the Canadian Association of University Teachers claims that, "in the current climate, research is weighted far more highly than teaching is, and it creates a culture where professors are rewarded for bringing in research and corporate funding." The numbers corroborate Robinson's fear. "In the decade ending in the 2000/2001 school year, the operating grants collected by universities for every full-time student dropped from \$8,607 to \$6,991 in constant

year-2000 dollars. Over the same stretch of time, federal research grants rose by \$455 million a year, to \$1.51-billion." Governments are choosing research funding over accessibility.

So, to sum up, there are three major components to neo-liberal globalization's assault on public post-secondary education: (1) A reduction in government tax bases due to trade and investment agreements that increase the power of corporations and investors to demand lower taxes, thereby reducing public spending on education; (2) Neo-liberal ideology's antagonism towards social entitlements, post-secondary education included, and its advocacy of capitalist entitlements and marketplace; (3) The conversion of post-secondary education into a commodity in WTO or FTAA agreements.

When we take to the streets in support of public post-secondary education on September 13 while the FTAA ministers meet, we should keep this in mind.

Yves Engler is a member of the Concordia Student Union council and is currently working on a book about student activism at Concordia. This article was adapted from a chapter in the book. He can be reached at yvesengler@hotmail.com.

LOCAL 333



SEIU

CANADA

Stronger Together

Mobilization stops Privatization

by Theresa Wolfwood

When Dr. Luz Estrella Rodriguez and Dr. Armando Heriberto Lucha of El Salvador, were in Victoria this summer they said they wanted to build solidarity with Canadians - not only around their health care strike but also to create awareness of the dangers of privatization of health care everywhere, including Canada. By June, health workers, including doctors, had been on strike for eight months in the Central American country of El Salvador. Their aim was not higher salaries or job benefits; their aim was to save their public health care from privatization.

Dr. Rodriguez, a public health doctor, decided this year that health workers must become involved in politics and ran for office as a member of the FMLN which supports public health care. She was elected mayor of Apopa, a municipality of 400,000 people and continues her work through professional, social and political action.

Dr. Lucha, the secretary of the union of health workers, SIMETRESS, explained that as a doctor who had signed the Hippocratic Oath to help his patients, he had to strike against privatization of health care because he knew it would be bad for the health of people. He has participated in lengthy hunger strikes to publicize the urgency of this health issue in a country where 50 per cent of the population live below the poverty line.

The strikers were voluntary members of unions with no strike pay and many were arrested, beaten and jailed for their beliefs. The people of El Salvador supported the strikers' goal by building a broad coalition of support that includes peasants, teachers, unions and workers in all sectors of healthcare and by organizing massive demonstrations to save their health care and support the strikers.

Public and political action continues; solidarity work as well as political organization to support the FMLN in next year's presidential elections. Polls show



Doctors Rodriguez and Lucha from El Salvador in Canada to encourage resistance to privatization of health care

the FMLN leading now. In the March, 2003 elections, the FMLN party won a majority of seats in the parliament of El Salvador. They presented and passed a bill that preserved public health care, paid back salary to striking workers and gave amnesty to those jailed for their role in the strike. The president of the country, representing the rightwing ARENA party, vetoed the bill.

Just days after the doctors spoke in Victoria, the strike ended in victory for the health workers and the citizens of El Salvador. El Salvador's long health care strike against the privatization of health care came to an end with an agreement between the government representatives and medical workers and professional associations. The agreement includes measures to re-instate all workers who had been on strike since September 18, 2002, to provide partial back pay, job security and seniority to strikers and the formation of a National Commission for Follow-up on Integral Health Care Reform, according to CIS, the Salvadorian solidarity network. The most important objective of the strike was met: to delay plans to privatize the Social Security Hospital System (hospital for formally employed Salvadorians) and the Ministry of Public Health Hospital

System (public health care system for unemployed and informally employed Salvadorians).

Crucial to this agreement was an agreement given to the The Colegio Medico by representatives of the World Bank in Washington DC to give a promised loan without its condition of privatization. The World Bank had included privatization of health care as part of a loan agreement to modernize the Ministry of Health Care System. This condition of privatization of public services is a major imperative for many World Bank loans in the majority world.

This strike was supported by a formidable new social movement in El Salvador and the citizens have become aware of the dangers of privatization. In polls taken by the Jesuit University, eight of every 10 Salvadorians oppose the privatization of health care. They could see the rich elite of their country revamping health care for service and profit for the top 30 percent of the population who could afford it. Further down the line would be foreign corporations taking over under the new GATS agreement of the WTO wherein any private service must be equally open to foreign as well as local profiteers.

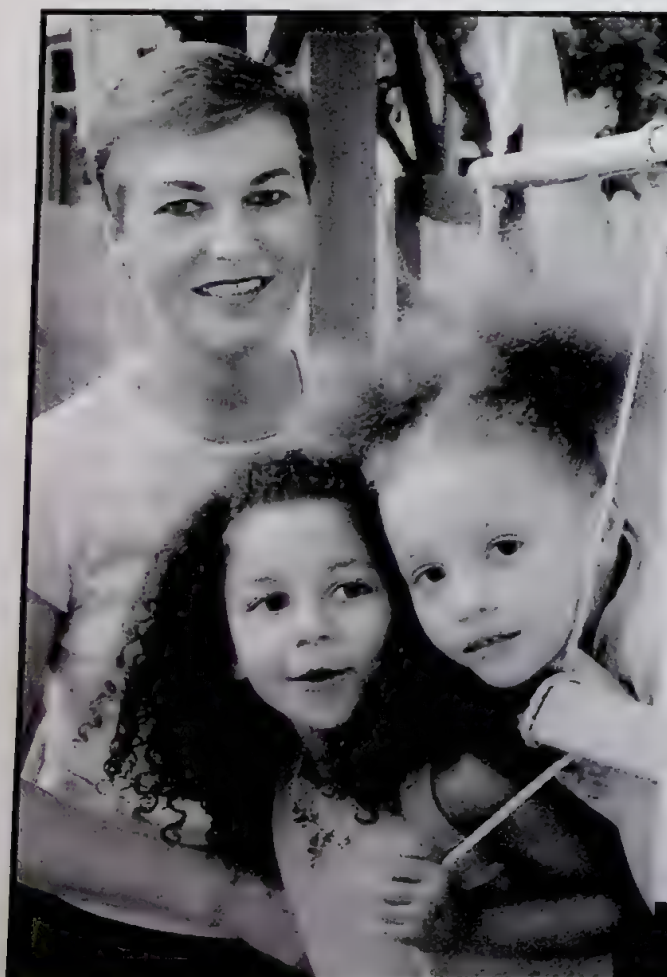
CIS says that this movement has to be taken seriously by international lending institutions and multinationals who desire to make a profit off of the privatization of health care, education, water, and other public

services. This will set a precedent for other Latin American countries also struggling against the privatization of public services. Of course, attempts to privatize the hospital systems will continue and constant vigilance and mobilization will be needed to guarantee the implementation of the agreements and stop continued attempts to privatize the health care system in more insidious ways.

Dr. Mata, president of the Colegio Medico recognized the importance of international solidarity in accompanying the struggle of the Salvadorian people to guarantee their right to health care. Thousands of letters from churches and unions around the world, medical associations in Latin America, and many international supporters bolstered the strike and mass mobilizations in El Salvador.

This commitment and solidarity is heartening for Canadians who are just beginning to see that we may lose our universal health care system. We can take inspiration to organize ourselves: if Salvadorians can do it, why can't we? I remember the words of Dr. Rodriguez and Dr. Lucha, "You have a wonderful health care system - SAVE IT!"

Theresa Wolfwood works for the Barnard-Boecker Centre Foundation in Victoria, BC. She was a speaker at an international conference on Women, Privatization and the GATS in Cologne, Germany in May, 2003.



Mr Premier: Keep your promise

Premier Calvert promised action to provide wage parity to workers in child care centres, women's shelters, group homes and other community-based organizations (CBOs).

The former Social Services Minister repeated the promise: "We are committed to working with the CBO and child care sectors to develop a long-term strategy to address salary, training and operating cost issues."

Although two years have passed, there is still no funding plan and workers continue to earn poverty-level wages.

Premier Calvert: Child care and other CBO workers are counting on you to keep your promise to provide wage parity.

Presented by SGEU, CUPE and SEIU

SHRUBGATE

SASKATCHEWAN NDP GOVERNMENT PANICS

BY J. F. CONWAY

The Calvert government is in a panic mode, bordering on hysteria. That is the only reasonable explanation for the forced resignation of a minor NDP caucus employee for calling Bush "President Shrub" in a leaked memorandum. Let's recall the incident. Caucus researcher Ted Bowen wrote a memorandum to all NDP MLAs, nominated candidates, and MPs bringing them up to speed on the Saskatchewan government's petition to Bush to re-open the border to Canadian beef. In it Bowen refers to the "petition to President Shrub." Inadvertently the memorandum was faxed to the media. This was obviously an "in joke," even more so when one realizes that Bowen is a 1960s political refugee from Texas. It was not meant as a public document. Bowen holds no political office, does not speak for the government - he is a lowly researcher for the caucus.

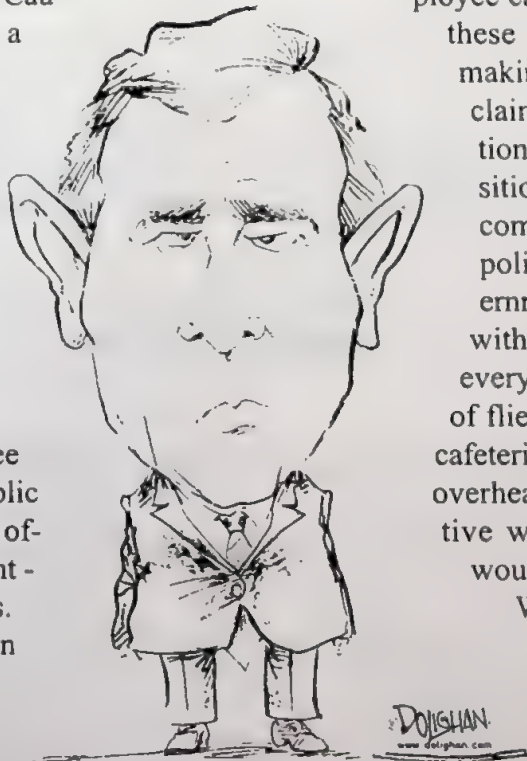
But thanks to the Saskatchewan Party and the media, all hell broke loose. The Regina *Leader-Post* decided to make it the lead, top of the fold front page story on July 31st, in which Opposition Leader Hermanson got a lot of ink denouncing the memorandum for offending Bush and, by implication, giving Bush further reasons to keep the border closed. The *Leader-Post* reporter got caught up in the hysteria, comparing

Bowen's shrub remark to Chrétien's press secretary Ducros's reference to Bush as "a moron" and Liberal MP Parrish's comment, "Damn Americans. I hate those bastards." Whoa, wait a minute - a minor caucus employee calling Bush a shrub is equivalent to

these much higher profile personalities making much harsher remarks? Such a claim is ludicrous and out of all proportion. It is easy to understand why Opposition Leader Hermanson jumped on the comment to squeeze as much negative political leverage against the NDP government as possible. If he could get away with it, he would have headline stories every day, complaining about the number of flies the NDP allows in the Legislative cafeteria or the off-colour political jokes he's overheard NDP MLAs make in the legislative washrooms. But usually the media would not be used in such a manner.

Why, then, would the media, particularly the *Leader-Post*, decide to make such a trivial incident the top front page story on three days - front page lead stories on July 31st and August 5th, and top story of the second section on

August 6th? Are they just desperate for news filler, or, as one might suspect given recent coverage of the Calvert government, has the local media decided to assist in the widely anticipated NDP defeat? Again,



anyone familiar with the history of blatant media bias, especially on the part of the two major dailies, against the CCF/NDP would not be surprised.

What is less fathomable were the actions of the NDP government and the premier. They all fell in line with the view that this incident was a horrendous event and that Bowen had to be severely punished. This can only be explained by their own panic at the looming prospect of defeat and a foolish effort to pander to their critics, even on such silly matters as this. The over reactions of the Saskatchewan Party and the press – and of senior NDPers – smacked of scapegoating. It was a kind of pathetic prostrating of themselves before the throne of Emperor Bush, begging for forgiveness as the head of Ted Bowen (thankfully metaphorically) was offered on a platter to the almighty Bush. I was embarrassed and ashamed for all of them.

Think of the appalling double standard. For years, we had very nasty jokes about Clinton and cigars, fellatio, semen stains on dresses - on and on, endlessly. Did the Saskatchewan Party or the Canadian Alliance leap to his defense and call for an end to such insults? For years - and it continues – there have been endless very nasty jokes and remarks about our prime minister, some of them uttered by Sask Party and NDP politi-

cians. Where is the outrage? Where are the demands for respect for the office of prime minister, and the harsh penalties for those who show disrespect? There are none.

But a small tweak of Bush's nose during our cattle industry's time of need, and the NDP's time of political desperation, leads to this. The message is clear and appalling – genuflect before Bush, show him deference and respect, and maybe we can again sell our cattle. So we are for sale. For how much? Maybe we should join the USA in its occupation of Iraq, cheer its illegal detention of alleged terrorists, applaud its vigilante murder of heads of state, call for the invasion of Iran. Will Bush then open the border to our cattle?

Shame on Premier Calvert. Shame on the NDP. Shame on the Sask Party, apparently more loyal to Bush than our own prime minister. And shame on the media for allowing itself to be used. To Ted Bowen I say, I am deeply sorry. These people don't speak for me and, I suspect, most Canadians.

John Conway is a University of Regina political sociologist and the author of The West: The History of a Region in Confederation.

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Communications Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada

JUSTIN PHILANDER INTERVIEWS

DARREN ELL

ABOUT HIS PHOTOJOURNALISM WORK.

EMBEDDED IN THE STRUGGLE FOR JUSTICE



photo: Darren Ell

Young busker in Mexico City

Justin: I understand that you were a teacher before you pursued photography. At what point did you decide to leave your teaching job in Regina and pursue a career in photography in Montreal?

Darren: I've been doing photojournalistic work for about six years but have been unable to pursue it as a full-time bread-and-butter career. That's a tough life and the jobs are slim. I continue to teach on a near full-time basis, which focuses my work. I left teaching in Regina after nine years. I was tired and needed a rest. I got accepted into the Art Photography program at Concordia University in Montreal, probably the best program in Canada.

My first work of this type was street photography I did in Mexico City and Europe. Lately, my work has been focused on the Palestinian cause both in Montreal and in the Occupied Territories. I decided to pick an issue I understood, despite the obvious dangers. Aside from the excellent aesthetic/critical learning offered at Concordia, Montreal has a number of very active political/solidarity communities. My connections with the Palestinian community have allowed me to connect with people overseas and have fed my knowledge of the

issues. As well, Montreal nourished my second language skills of course. Quebec has a long history of activist politics and the large Arab population here serves as a great source of learning about Middle East politics.

Justin: Have there been any obstacles in carrying out your projects or in getting your work published or shown?

Darren: The type of work I'm doing is not easy. It's hard to sell photographs because there are a lot of huge agencies offering millions of photographs online to magazines, often bypassing the work of local photographers. I also have problems with the interpretations given to these photographs by the mainstream media in almost every issue involving colonial violence. Generally, these issues are cast as a "conflict" or a "war" with two adversaries slugging it out. Nothing could be further from the truth. I'm particularly disgusted with the mainstream coverage of the Palestinian struggle for these reasons. This is why during my first journey to the region I published my work in Canadian alternative magazines and on ZNET and Electronic Intifada. These publications share my world-view and I agreed with the context of the



Selling flowers in Mexico City traffic
photo: Darren Ell

writing that accompanied my images.

The obstacles are many indeed. One is financial - it's expensive. But I use the income I make teaching (fortunately a decent income thanks to the good work done over the years by the unions) to fund my projects.

The other obstacle in the Palestinian case is the Israeli Defense Force (IDF), a violent organization that operates with virtual impunity in the Occupied Territories. They limit one's entry into the Territories and they have few qualms about murdering Palestinians or foreigners, as recent history has clearly shown. So while walking the streets of Rafah or Gaza City, one is a tad nervous about getting picked off by an Israeli sniper.

One thing that is not an obstacle is the openness of the Palestinian people themselves. All photojournalists who respect their subjects find that victimized people are very willing to show the world their lot. I was welcomed for interviews, allowed to take photographs in hospitals, at funerals and in people's homes - all the time. Extraordinary access. Despite the cruelty with which the Western mainstream media has treated these people, once you convince them of the sincerity of your intentions, they show you everything.

Justin: How has your work shaped your vision of social justice for yourself and others?

Darren: Indeed. Although I despair daily about the ongoing tragedy of the Palestinians (one among so many terrible situations in the world that need fixing), I'm pleased that my work has circulated worldwide. I have received many emails of thanks and many important Palestinian organizations have shown my work.

During my first trip, I communicated regularly with a class of grade 11 students at Thom Collegiate in Regina. They were moved by my reports and they all admitted it challenged their view both of the issue itself and of the way it was portrayed in the media. This is something I'd like to do more of. I believe strongly that young people need exposure to a wider range of views on political issues. They're young and curious and not yet deeply brainwashed by the media. I often felt that the left-wing world had abandoned our youth, and that schools were evil cauldrons of conservatism. We mustn't forget that ALL PEOPLE go to school,

making it a good target for hopeful left-wingers.

Aside from this, there's the daily contact I have with people on an individual basis, which gives me an opportunity, if they want to know, to express my views on events. There is a certain ripple effect here of course.

Witnessing the real world is an experience of great privilege and I will do more of it. Undistilled reality puts everything in perspective. When you see and meet for yourself the people enduring the vile policies of the masters of the world, it inspires you to want to change things. It is truly shocking what the USA and Israel are doing in the Middle East. What is even more shocking are the interpretations that are allowed to run, often unopposed, in our media system.

Being connected to the alternative media system, working with NGO's and witnessing first-hand the destructive capacity of states makes one aware of all that needs to be done. It's easy to despair when one compares the destructive power of a small number of maniacs to the daily ongoing work of thousands of individuals and organizations trying to stop them.

Then again, the international consensus is increasingly critical of USA-Israeli policy. It's very obviously up to ordinary people to keep working to influence both public opinion and official policy to make things better.

Justin Philander worked at Briarpatch this summer as part of his experience with Solidarity WORKS! - a project for youth co-ordinated by the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour and the Canadian Labour Congress.

Twins Separated at Birth?



Elwin Hermanson



Homer Simpson

Both have an H and a SON in their names

Both have the same hairline

Both have three children

Confused?

- ☐ This man's politics started in the Reform party.
- ☐ This man is leader of the Saskatchewan Party.
- ☐ This man was once Mayor Quimby's body guard.
- ☐ This man is leader of the crowd heading to Moe's.

Which would you rather follow?

(This message brought to you by the committee to prevent the election of either twin)



Artist: Mendelson Joe (Emsdale, ON)
Winner: Terry Toews (Swift Current, SK)

ART RAFFLE 2003

Artist: Ron Ewenin *Wapemoose* (Regina, SK)
Winner: Sydney Craigen (Medicine Hat, AB)



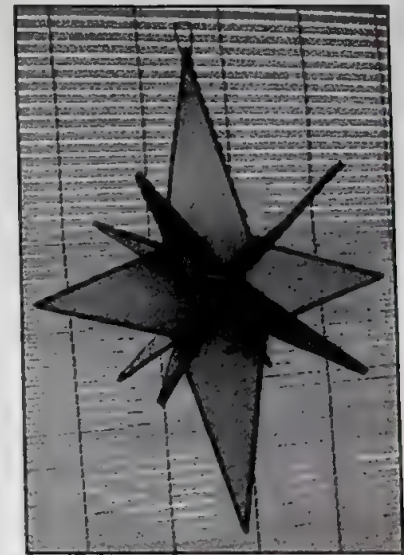
Artist: Wanda Miller (Regina, SK)
Winner: James Hodges (Saskatoon, SK)

Artist: Lyndon Tootosis (Regina, SK)
Winner: N.A. Wells (Saskatoon, SK)

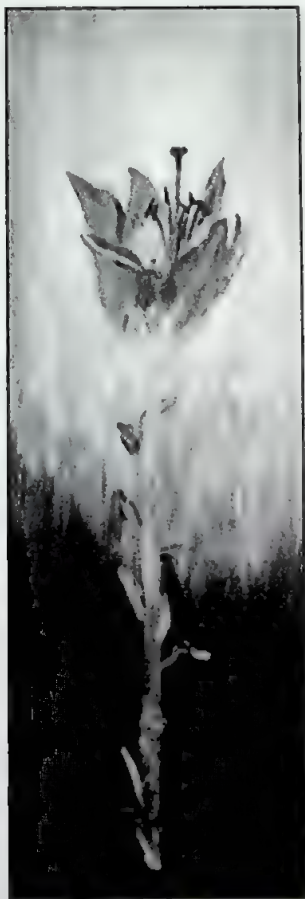




Artist: Sara Kuziak (Regina, SK)
Winner: Val Kench (Gananoque, ON)



Artist: Jill Cairns (Regina, SK)
Winner: Betty Gordon (Wapella, SK)



A big "Thank You" to all the artists who donated these wonderful prizes and all the subscribers who bought and sold tickets on our behalf. This years Art Raffle was a huge success and generated much-needed revenues to keep Briarpatch in the struggle.

Artist: Chelsea Looysen (Regina, SK)
Winner: Garnet Dishaw (Regina, SK)



Artist: Heather Rodriguez (Regina, SK)
Winner: Dylan Evans (Saskatoon, SK)



Freedom for the Cuban Five

Responding to Ignorance

This letter was written by René González, one of the Cuban Five political prisoners in American prison, in response to the Campaign for Peace and Democracy (CPD) statement that denounced Cuba for the trials of counter-revolutionaries, conducted in Cuba in March of 2003. Joanne Landy spearheaded this anti-Cuba campaign.

Dear Ms. Joanne Landy:

Being a Cuban revolutionary all of my life, having fought in Angola against the South African invasion and being, at the present time, incarcerated in a USA federal prison for protecting the Cuban people from the terrorist actions supported, encouraged and hidden by the United States government, I hope that - if being progressive is still to fight for a better world - I might be entitled to the benefit of being considered a progressive person.

So, when I opened a magazine called precisely, *The Progressive*, and read an ad by the Campaign for Peace and Democracy requesting signatures in order to condemn Cuba for its alleged "repression on dissidents," I was, at best, in disbelief.

I can't imagine that somebody could consider themselves a progressive person and then take at its word the endemic slandering and lies of the USA media in regards to Cuba. It would only take a little bit of intellectual honesty and some research to discover that the money to pay "dissidents" is appropriated, overtly and openly, by the USA authorities to be distributed through entities like National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and USAID among whomever on the island decides to make a living as a dissident.

Who gives any moral authority to the American government to create a paid opposition in Cuba? What international principle of law applies to this behavior? Since when is it a role of a USA diplomat to tour the island organizing the "opposition" and giving out money?

Whoever, in his or her country, receives money from a foreign power to undermine their own government, is considered a traitor, be it in Cuba or in any other nation of the world, including the United States.

These so-called "dissidents" have - contrary to what appears in the ad - all the right to express their opinions in Cuba. All they have to do is to stand up at a nomination meeting and explain to their neighbors that they want to take the country back to 1959, return the Cuban land to the United Fruit Company, recall the terrorists that now live in Miami to the island and give them their properties back, sell the country to the transnationals and become themselves the political class who will defend the interests of the few. If their neighbors agree with them they will be nominated while expressing their political platform in front of the electorate.

But if they run into a revolutionary constituency - and their neighbors are committed to their country and support the government of the people, for the people and

by the people; and having fought and died for their society, don't want to betray the memory of the patriots who have given their lives for the sovereignty and independence of Cuba - then no "dissident" will be nominated nor will she or he obtain any votes.

And if they don't deserve the confidence of their people, they don't have the right to go to the American embassy - the last place I would think of as a haven for democracy - to find a source of sovereignty that only lies in the Cubans.

Cuba, for more than 40 years, has faced a state of hostility and war that has caused more than 3,000 deaths and more than 2,000 injured on account of terrorist and armed actions carried out by traitors paid, trained and supplied by the USA government. Those mercenaries were dealt with through the legal system. They weren't arbitrarily declared "enemy" or "illegal" combatants, or disposed of through a drone-launched rocket so that Fidel could pose to the cameras declaring them "no longer a problem," or subjected to secret military tribunals, nor were their families' homes demolished by the Cuban military.

They were given sentences according to their involvement in their terrorist activities instead of the irrational punishment accorded here to the Puerto Rican patriots, just for their affiliation to a given organization, or the vindictive treatment given to me and my co-defendants for protecting Cuba from those mercenaries who now, with their money and connections to the USA administration, sponsor schemes like the one of the "dissidents" or the encouragement of illegal immigration from Cuba in order to justify the aggressive policy against Cuba.

The Cuban people have had no other option than to take their losses and to keep building the socialist society that too many have fought for, leaving it to history to make us justice and relying on extreme patience and enormous courage.

I don't know how many real progressive people are adhering to this campaign against Cuba, being that things here are so relative that somebody can be labeled as liberal just for eating a hamburger with the left hand, and having grown used to seeing someone on TV pronounced leftist just because they are a little to the left of George Wallace.

But I assume there must be some genuine progressive people among them; people who really care about human rights and who honestly believe in justice. People misguided by a perverse media which leaves them without any other reference when they try to understand what happens around the world. To these people I want to say this:

Consider for a moment the awesome power accumulated by the USA imperialist government. Consider the enormous sense of impunity that right now can be felt by these people who just accomplished a war of aggression defying the whole world, lying in front of everybody like

nobody has done before to justify it, creating a criminal and illegal doctrine of preemptive war, breaking any principle of international relations in the process and getting away with all of it. Compare this overwhelming power with the little island of Cuba and it won't be hard to see how much damage this fascist establishment can inflict on my country with so little.

I've always had the best of respect for the honest Americans who, overcoming the immense power of the most sophisticated machinery of deception ever designed, have been able to look beyond all of that to have a view of world events that pays homage to this country. It takes a lot of intelligence, curiosity, courage and, above all, a lot of sensitivity.

I want to appeal to that sensitivity and, with all my respect, invite you to think of this: One thing was to be a Roman citizen, with all privileges accorded to full citizenship, discussing democracy and liberty on the senate or on the streets of Rome; and another thing, completely different, was to be fighting for that democracy and that liberty, in the field, against all odds, under the siege of Pompeii legions, defending your very life together with Spartacus.

Very truly yours,
René González Schwerert
Federal Correctional Institution
Edgefield, South Carolina

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Catholic Nuns Jailed...



popular doll

Setting a precedent that may be used against other peace activists, three nuns waited in jail for 10 months facing the possibility of being incarcerated for the remainder of their lives after they symbolically disarmed a Minuteman III nuclear missile silo in northern Colorado last October.

The three defendants, Ardeth Platte, 66, Carol Gilbert, 55, and Jackie Hudson, 68, entered the military facility dressed in toxic clean-up suits with the slogan "CWIT (Citizen Weapons Inspection Team)" written on the front and "Disarmament Specialist" on the back.

The nuns symbolically tapped hammers on the tracks that allow the silo to fire, poured their own blood to form crosses on the tracks, said a liturgy, and sang hymns before their arrest.

On April 7th, a jury convicted the women on two charges - obstruction of national defence and injury to USA property - charges that could have brought the women up to 30 years imprisonment. The nuns have remained behind bars since their arrest last October, refusing to accept bail because they could not promise to avoid other acts of dissent.

(source: Yes! A Journal of Positive Futures

www.yesmagazine.org)

for Civil Disobedience



photo: Jonah House (Disarm Now)

Nuns approach fence with sign and wire-cutters

Resistance is a Habit

On July 25th Roman Catholic Sister Jackie Hudson was sentenced to 30 months in prison, Sr. Carol Gilbert got 33 months, and Sr. Ardeth Platte got 41 months in jail for the action that they say symbolizes that they would rather pour out their own blood than have USA weapons take the blood of another. The nuns read their pre-sentencing statements at a press conference before entering court, where they remained mute (and were dressed in black) in solidarity with the international peace organization Women in Black.

In her statement, Sister Gilbert made reference to a slogan seen on t-shirts, "You can jail the resister but not the resistance." She stated, "I will continue to resist with every fiber of my being so that not one child will ever ask, 'Why were you complicit?'"

Sister Platte raised many questions in her statement. "Don't people claim today that the citizens of

Germany should have blocked the trains carrying people to the crematoriums, dismantled the ovens, or done something to stop the mass murder of people by Hitler? How will future generations judge all of us?" She invited contemplation about what the USA's new laws will mean. "Will the punitive measures taken against dissenters, enforced under Patriot Bills I and II, be so harsh that any lawlessness on the part of government officials will go unchallenged in the future? Who will be courageous enough to reveal the lies and stop the murderous conduct in Afghanistan and Iraq? Who will demand an end to American interventionism? Who will stand on behalf of the people contaminated by depleted uranium? Who will be there for prisoners illegally detained in Guantanamo? Who will teach the treaties and USA Constitution and who will demand the implementation by every court of the land? Who will bring nonviolence into the forefront for conflict-solving?"

Sister Platte also announced that "Whatever sentence I receive today will be joyfully accepted as an offering for peace."

(source: complete statements can be found at Fountain of Light www.fountainoflight.net)



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(by Theresa Wolfwood)

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High and Mighty: SUVs - The World's Most Dangerous Vehicles and How They Got That Way

by Keith Bradsher

PublicAffairs, New York, 2002.

This mighty book will threaten to knock the other books off your bedside table, but it should be there if you are considering buying an SUV. Keith Bradsher, Detroit bureau chief of *The New York Times* from 1996 to 2001, has written a very comprehensive and comprehensible volume on the track record of the Sport Utility Vehicles. Relying on interviews with executives from within the auto industry, he exposes the danger to pedestrians, occupants of cars sharing the streets, and even to the driver and passengers in SUVs in accidents. He refers to them as "tall tippy monstrosities with mediocre brakes that block other driver's view of the road and inflict massive damage during collisions." Also alarming is their impact on the environment: "Switching from a mid-sized car to a large SUV for a year consumes as much energy as leaving a refrigerator door open for six years."

Bradsher warns of a steady increase in the number of SUVs on the road unless something can be done to halt the misleading advertising, legislative loop-holes about fuel efficiency enjoyed by manufacturers, and the intimidation factor that is pushing car owners to switch over to SUVs.

Extensive market research by the industry (that "dwarfs anything done by politicians") shows manufacturers just who's whims they are catering to: "They tend to be people who are insecure and vain. They are frequently nervous about their marriages and uncomfortable about parenthood. They often lack confidence in their driving skills. Above all, they are apt to be self-centred and self-absorbed,

with little interest in their neighbours or communities.

Honda's research has identified SUV buyers as being very concerned with how other people see them, rather than worrying about what is practical." It's about fashion. For some, the SUV symbolizes the owner's desire to be free wheeling in the great outdoors but the sad reality is that most of these four-wheel drive gas guzzlers are stuck idling in city traffic, emitting up to six times the smog-causing nitrogen oxides that come from cars.

Even if you're not in the market for a new vehicle, read the book. Someone you know has their eye on an SUV. Stop them.



Confessions of a Matriarchist: Rebuilding Society on Feminine Principles

by Bill Longstaff

Ballot Publishing, 2003.

www.ballotpublishing.ca

This is a book for anyone looking for ways to work towards changing a patriarchal society into one based on equality, compassion and respect for the environment. Bill Longstaff points to many examples of inroads around the world, making this book an excellent read for anyone who feels their efforts are futile - it's going to be a huge job, but the conversion is already underway.

Even if you are firm in your belief that nurture has a lot more to do with who we are gender-wise, you will probably be intrigued by the examples and arguments presented to show the impact of the two differing "replication ethos" on our society. Longstaff explains how humanity's genes have constructed "replication machines" (male and female) with big brains - intelligence being a good survival technique. He argues that this intelligence and the development of culture are "safe in the hands of those principally devoted to nurtur-

ing, but highly dangerous in the hands of a gender preoccupied with competition, dominance and status. When the urge for dominance devises weapons that can annihilate an entire city, *Homo sapiens* itself is threatened, not just the Other. And when culture allows us to not simply pick fruit and hunt small animals but to deplete oceans, all species must shudder."

Longstaff examines patriarchy's control of religion, science, the media, education, the legal system - and the changes that are taking place to thwart this control. In these days of macho warrior stances and attempts at global domination, this book helps to refresh one's optimism about the future. He puts a lot of emphasis on the importance of raising the next generation to be open-minded and empathic while stripping out the macho. Most readers will agree that society encourages the repression of the "feminine" qualities such as affectionate, gentle, co-operative, patient or caring behaviours in male children. To move towards a matriarchal society, we must "concentrate less on teaching boys to be men and more on allowing them to be complete human beings. Being male is good, and important; being fully human is a great deal more important." Important to the survival of our species, and many others.



The Roadmap to Nowhere

by Dr. Ismail Zayid

Being a Palestinian, one is born into this struggle and you can't get out of it no matter what you do. It's a birth mark that I've experienced since I was three years old. I want to discuss the so-called roadmap to peace - the "roadmap to nowhere" is an accurate description. Alexander Cockburn, a well-known American journalist, wrote: "Don't waste your time fretting over the fortunes of the roadmap to peace in the Middle East. It's all a fraud following the contours of other frauds." There were a variety of plans before this one: the Rogers Plan, the Mitchell Plan, the Zinni Plan, the Tenet Plan and the Oslo Plan. A variety of plans all manufactured to prolong the agony of this struggle and bring the Palestinians to nowhere.

In fact there was another interesting statement by Alexander Cockburn based on the June 24th speech that George W. Bush made last year. He said: "The speech sounded at the time like it was written by Ariel Sharon and it probably was." Senator William Fullbright stated 30 years ago that: "the American policy in the Middle East emanates from Tel Aviv not Washington," and that's an accurate statement. I say this is a fraud because it is evading the fundamental issues of international law and basic humanity that ought to be the fundamental principle of any peaceful solution. It talks about a three year process to end in a kind of statelet for the Palestinians, a form of a Bantustan, with no definable qualities in terms of control of its borders, skies, water resources - none of this. It requires that the Palestinians at the outset forgo any element of resistance to an illegal occupation to which they are subjected, and they submit to

whatever the United States and Sharon decide.

There are many questions that ought to be dealt with: Why would we need three years to achieve whatever is vaguely defined as this statelet of Palestine? The Palestinian territory we're talking about now is the illegally occupied territories in 1967 of the West Bank including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza strip. These were occupied 36 years ago - an illegal occupation through armed aggression committed by Israel against its neighbours. Besides occupying the Palestinian territories, there's the Golan Heights of Syria and other territories occupied. Why do we have to wait 36 years to discuss this illegal occupation? Why does this require negotiation? When Saddam Hussein occupied Kuwait in 1990, nobody talked about the negotiation of withdrawal from 90 percent, 80 percent or 60 percent of the occupied territory. This was not acceptable. There was a Security Council resolution and a million troops were sent from the United States and its allies including Canada and Arab countries to evict Saddam Hussein from illegally occupied territory in Kuwait. Israeli occupation of the territories of the West Bank and Gaza as well as Golan Heights stands against repeated Security Council resolutions as well as blatantly defying international law and yet we are told we have to negotiate. The two parties have to negotiate? Here are the Palestinians who are literally weak and disarmed. If they are to negotiate with Sharon, then he determines the final terms of the agreement.

The other aspect of this, is the incredible behaviour of the Palestinian leaders. Mr. Abbas

who was at the Aqaba Summit stated: "The armed Intifada must end." The armed Intifada is a form of resistance to an illegal occupation. The United Nations Charter and repeated United Nations resolutions state categorically that people under foreign occupation are entitled to resist this foreign occupation by all means in their power. Yet we're told that the Palestinians have to forgo any system of resistance against this illegal occupation. Mr. Abbas also went on to talk about the Jewish suffering throughout history. The Jewish suffering throughout history is no fault of the Palestinians, yet there was no mention of Palestinian suffering during the 55 years of dispossession and ethnic cleansing to which they were subjected, and no mention of Palestinian aims in his statement whatsoever.

The fault of this roadmap, as with previous plans, is that there is no mention that it will have to be effected in compliance with international law. International law seems to be evaded, blatantly and clearly. Similarly, the fault of Abbas and his followers is that they signed an agreement without specifying what are the ultimate terms. It is unacceptable to sign an agreement without specifying clearly the fundamental issues of how they must be resolved, the borders of this state, the complete dismantlement of the illegal settlements, the right of return for the Palestinian refugees, the water resources, who controls the border and so on.

None of these issues are mentioned, they're left for negotiations! Why should they be negotiable? This is totally unacceptable and will not achieve anything for the Palestinians whatsoever.

In Sharon's statement at the Aqaba summit, he said he would "renew direct negotiations according to the steps in the roadmap as adopted by



A small pink chandelier remains in a destroyed Palestinian home at the edge of the wall
photo: Darren Ell

the Israeli government." The Israeli government adopted the roadmap with 14 amendments which stated clearly that the right of return would not be accepted or tolerated, Jerusalem would remain united under Israeli control, and the Jewish settlements in the occupied territories (illegal settlements in defiance of international law) would not be dismantled.. The Fourth Geneva Convention categorically states that an occupying power has no right to transfer it's population to the occupied territories - expropriation of property is totally unacceptable. There are about 400 thousand people living in these settlements and we're told they will stay there. These settlements have already expropriated approximately 60 percent of the land of the West Bank. They've built by-pass roads around these settlements, for Jews only, that make

the Palestinian movement from one village to another totally difficult. They're having to wait for hours at checkpoints. People who need medical aid or mothers who are about to give birth are kept for hours.

The story of the torture and oppression to which the Palestinians have been subjected is phenomenal. The extrajudicial assassinations, thousands of prisoners detained without charge or trial, the demolition of thousands of homes including total villages, the uprooting of orchards and olive trees. Recently a World Report stated that 83 thousand olive trees have been uprooted over the last year. All these acts are in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention, and thus tantamount to war crimes as defined by international law. This is ongoing yet Mr. Bush says we have to negotiate about it and we have to wait and see what comes about.

How is this reported in the world media? In a report from Washington in The Middle East International on June 27th, 2003, Michael Brown states: "Facts no longer seem to matter. They are malleable, easily altered to fit the prevailing view." Let us look at the facts. On the 3rd of June Mr. Bush arrived at the Sharm El-Sheikh Summit where he met the Arab leaders and they talked about this peace. On the 4th of June, he was at the Aqaba Summit with Sharon and Abbas. On the 5th of June, Israel assassinated two Palestinians near Tulkarm. I again quote Michael Brown: "No sooner had the upbeat Aqaba Summit concluded than the downbeat violence surged. The bloodshed was portrayed in almost all Americans newspapers as having been initiated by the Palestinians. This is not the case, but the papers were none the less relentless in publishing timelines claiming the post-Aqaba violence started on June 8th with a coordinated attack by various Palestinian factions on Israeli soldiers in Erez." On the 10th of June Sharon sent troops in an attempt to assassinate Aziz Rantisi and there was a Palestinian response after that.

Another process also going on at the moment is the building of the so-called separation wall which is in fact an apartheid wall being built in the occupied territories and West Bank annexing thousands of acres of land belonging to the Palestinians. In the town of Kalkelia, with a population of 40 thousand, which is an agricultural center in Palestine, 80 percent of their land is being

expropriated by this wall.

Stephanie Le Bens, from *Le Monde Diplomatique* from Paris, says: "From the north to the south in the west Bank, the land is covered with white gashes that rip through fields of olive trees, carve up hectares of greenhouses, separate families and disfigure villages. They are the wounds left by the busy steamrollers and bulldozers pushing ahead with the building of the separation, or apartheid wall as it is properly described". And she goes on: "the way in which the wall twists and turns with some sections penetrating several kilometers into the West Bank, initially planned to be 350 km is now over 600 km."

In my opinion, the struggle in this land will continue until justice is obtained for the Palestinian people. Evacuating all the settlements is crucial. This is an illegal occupation and there should be complete withdrawal. The Palestinian refugees, who were systematically evicted from their homeland in 1948, must be allowed to choose the right of return or accept compensation in accordance with the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and the UN Resolution #194. This is a fundamental principle and cannot be argued about, negotiated away or bargained by Mr. Sharon, Mr. Abbas, Mr. Arafat or anybody else. This is an individual right, the right of return for the Palestinian refugees.

Dr. Ismail Zayid was born and grew up in Beit Nuba, Palestine and now lives in Halifax, Nova Scotia. He is the author of numerous writings including two books: Palestine: A Stolen Heritage, and Zionism: The Myth and Reality. He is also founding President of the Canada Palestine Association.

This article is an excerpt from a speech recorded by Pierre Loiselle and originally broadcast on radio CKDU on July 23th, 2003. Dr. Zayid made the presentation at a forum called "The Roadmap to Nowhere: Palestine and the Struggle for World Peace" organized by the Halifax Symposium on Palestine and jointly sponsored by Dal For Peace and Justice, Halifax Peoples Front, Shunpiking magazine and the Canada Palestine Association.

My Opinion does not necessarily represent the editorial views of Briarpatch. We welcome submissions and encourage any ensuing dialogue.

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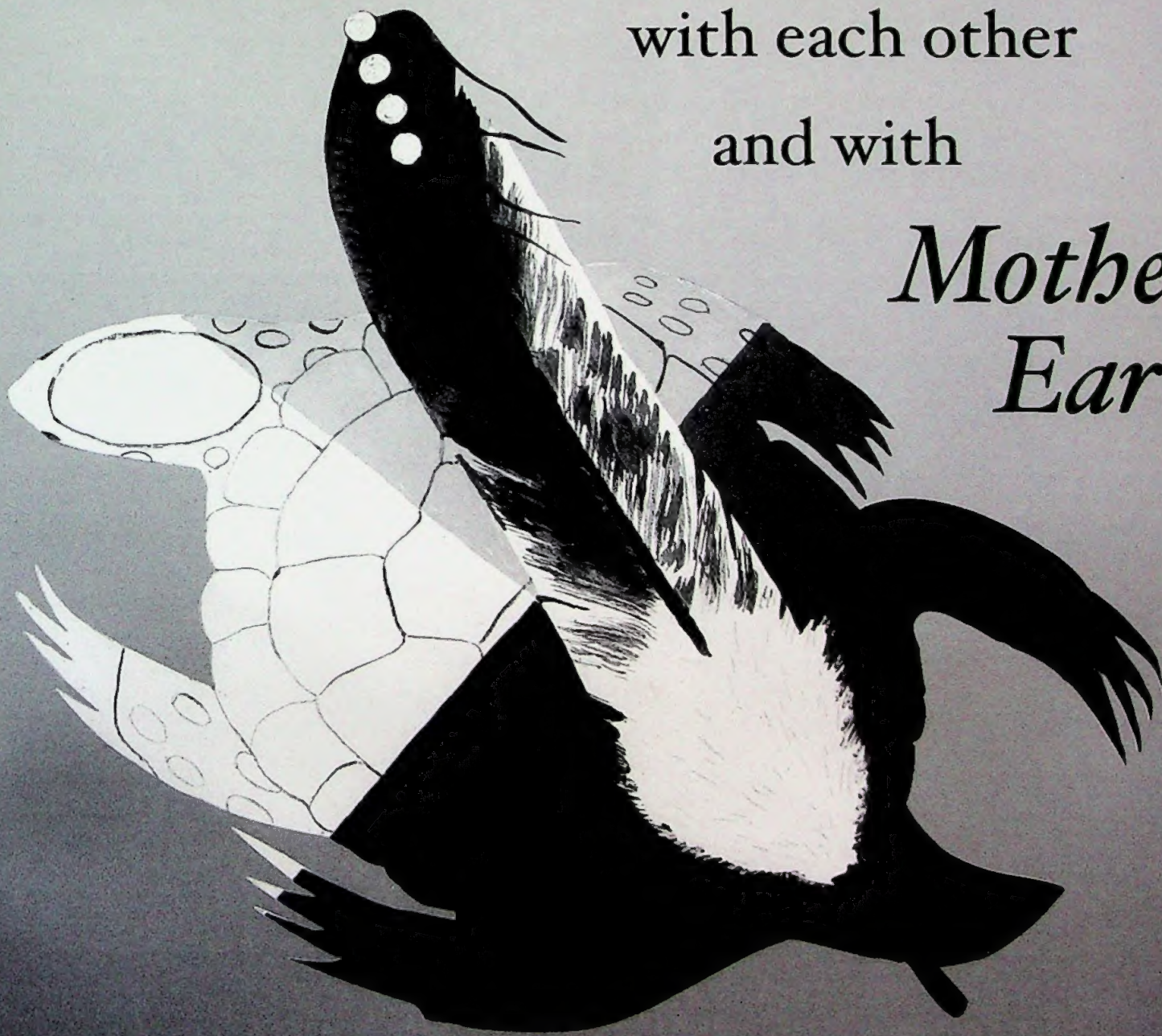


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